RECONSTRUCTING DISTRICT 3'S MISSING 1872 REGISTRO CENTRAL DE ESCLAVOS FOR NORTHWEST PUERTO RICO

Ellen Fernandez-Sacco, PhD

Color, origin & freedom in family histories via the certificates of the *Registro de Esclavos*

"…Aquí el que no tiene dinga
Tiene mandinga ... ¡ja, ja!
Por eso yo te pregunto
¿Y tu agüela, aonde ejtá?
Ayé me dijite negro
Queriéndome abochoná.
Mi agüela sale a la sala,
Y la tuya oculta ajtá…."

Excerpt, '*¿Y tu agüela aonde ejtá?*' - Fernando Fortunato Vizcarrondo [1]

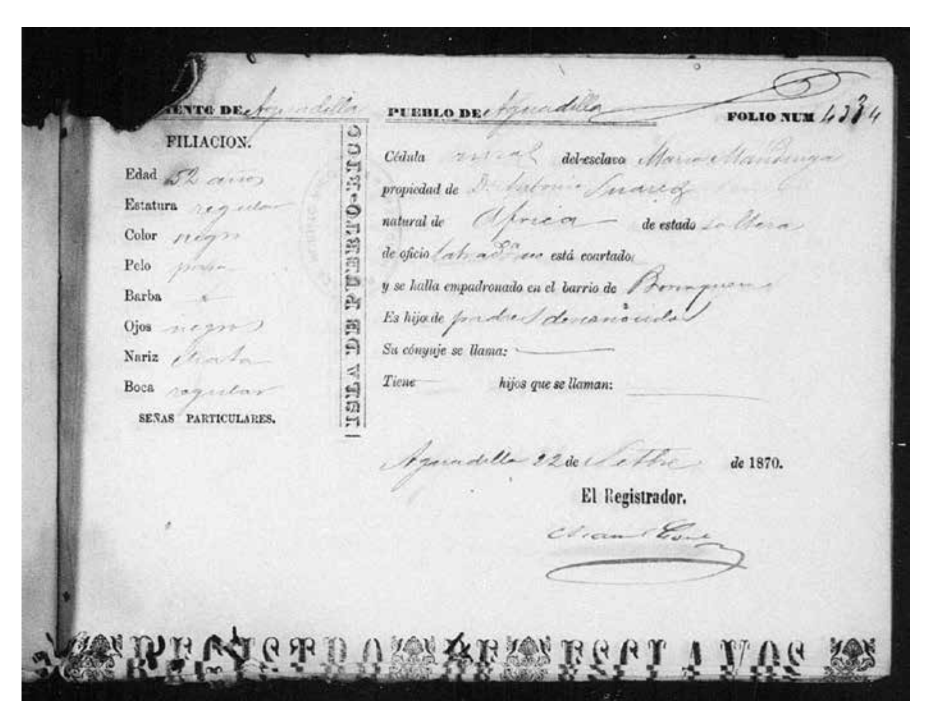
The volumes of the extant *Registro de Esclavos* of Puerto Rico are compiled from thousands of certificates for enslaved people in the district of Aguadilla. Reading their details and reflecting on their networks of family and kin brings to mind Fortunato Vizcarrondo's poem, ´*¿Y tu agüela aonde eitá?*'. The poem speaks to the complexity of *colorism* in Puerto Rico, a history that scales from the micro to the macro, from family to society with roots deep in slavery. Then and now, phenotypes on the island range from light to dark, from the literally white and blond to deeply melanated skin, all shades that reveal the multiplicity of ancestries often reduced to a political condition, a *casta* based on the darkness of one's skin, shaped by law.[2] The refrain of Vizcarrondo's poem, "And your grandmother, where is she?" plays on the presence of Africa paired with a resistance to shame, as the poem's couplets repeatedly point to the denial of an African inheritance hidden right at home.

---

[1] "Here, those who claim no Dinka | Has Mandinka... ha, ha! | And that's why I asked you | And your grandma, where is she? | Yesterday you called me black | Trying to embarrass me | My grandma comes out to the living room | While yours hides over there…". Fernando Fortunato Vizcarrondo, ¿Y tu agüela aonde ejtá? http://elboricua.com/Poem_Y%20tu%20abuela.html

[2] "*Colorism* is the allocation of privilege and disadvantage according to the lightness or darkness of one's skin. (Burke 2008)" "Colorism beliefs and practices operate both within and across racial and ethnic groups (Bonilla-Silva, 2009)." See Linda M. Burton, Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, Victor Ray, Rose Buckelew & Elizabeth Hordge Freeman. "Critical Race Theories, Colorism and the Decade's Research on Families of Color." http://www.cds.web.unc.edu/files/2013/01/Burton-Bonilla-Silva-Ray-Buckelew-Hordge-Freeman-Decade-Review1.pdf

In this article, I consider the context of the small 4 x 6″ certificates, called *cédulas* that comprise the source documents for the *Registro de Esclavos*, look at examples of origin and family that the documents contain, and the process of emancipation. This is followed by three appendices- the terms of the ley Moret, a list of 143 slave-holders compiled from the *cédulas* and a complete transcription of the 492 *cédulas* contained in Caja 4, one of the sets of documents that comprised the missing volume for District 3's *Registro de Esclavos* of 1872.



...ENTO DE ... PUEBLO DE ... FOLIO NUM 4334

FILIACION.

Edad 52 años
Estatura
Color
Pelo
Barba
Ojos
Nariz
Boca
SEÑAS PARTICULARES.

ISLA DE PUERTO-RICO

Cédula ... del esclavo ...
propiedad de ...
natural de Africa de estado ...
de oficio ... está coartado
y se halla empadronado en el barrio de ...
Es hijo de ...
Su cónyuge se llama: —
Tiene — hijos que se llaman:

Aguadilla 22 de ... de 1870.

El Registrador.

REGISTRO DE ESCLAVOS

María Mandinga, 52, (bca 1818) Born in Africa; laborer, "Es hija de padres desconocidos' 'propriedad de D. Antonio Suarez.' Barrio Borinquen, Aguadilla, 22 September 1870. Folio No. 4334. Caja 3, Film 008138868, Image No. 765.

This set of documents were apparently rescued from a fire, as the upper left corner exhibits burn marks, which raises questions about record destruction and preservation in the decades after their creation.

Looking at the information contained in the *cédulas* can illustrate that connections to this past are closer than we think. Comparing the list of people held in bondage to a list of the slave holders themselves reveals unexpected networks of familial ties in rural areas, with connections to parents and grandparents forgotten yet whose labor made that world possible. Many of us are blends of both free and enslaved, African, Afro-Indigenous, Indigenous and European ancestors that brought us forth. This paper is a contribution to the ancestors, to help bridge them with their descendants.

A Long Road to Freedom

Between 1868 and 1870, thousands of enslaved people in Puerto Rico took the first step in the government's provision of gradual emancipation and were inventoried according to the terms of the *Ley Moret* (Moret Law). These documents also contain information on a previous generation born in Africa during the late 18th-early 19th centuries who survived the Middle Passage. By 1870, now elders, few remained from this time.

Among them were María Mandinga, born in Africa about 1818, whose surname references Mandinka or Malinke people and points to her origin in West Africa, a region that extends from Mali to the Ivory Coast.[3] Mandinka peoples were among the earliest taken and sold in the New World, for instance, reaching Peru and Venezuela by the 1520s. In the Caribbean, they made up significant percentages of the enslaved population in Cuba, Santo Domingo and Louisiana during the eighteenth century, and later, on a smaller scale in early nineteenth century Puerto Rico. Given the locations in West Africa mentioned for early nineteenth century slave traffic, it is possible that María Mandinga was from Senegambia.[4] Some surnames on the documents point to cultural origins in Africa, continuing the memory of place in the Caribbean, and today, these locations are also visible in DNA results that can potentially connect to these ancestors.[5]

African Origins: 1788-1834

Africa is listed as a place of birth for 21 of the 492 people in Caja 4, annotated with either '*sin padres conocidos*' or a dash, indicating the separation from family and nation of origin. The dates of birth cover 1788 to 1834, the end of which marks the beginning of the internal slave trade; ages range from 82 to 36. Over these same years, changes in the laws over the Slave Trade yielded three sets of slave codes and for those who survived, manumission.

Spain continued to search for bonded labor to supply planters, despite the ongoing efforts of Britain to abolish the trade, and finally planters obtained a concession from Spain over importation by the 1830s; the illegal trade continued, involving nearby islands to ship the enslaved to the island.[6] Sales of enslaved men women and children continued in Puerto Rico right up to 1870, and as the 1873 census shows, over 31,000 persons remained enslaved. Looking to the start of the nineteenth century, the historian Antonio Nieves Mendez notes that the initial rise in the number persons classified as '*negros, mulatos y negros libres*' occurred after 1798 in Moca. Enslaved persons from Africa and other countries largely arrived in the decade between 1810-1820. Moca's growing local population of people of color counted nearly 16%, and comprised 17 enslaved Blacks, 35 enslaved *mulatos* and 37 free Blacks.[7]

---

[3] María Mandinka, No. 4334, Barrio Borinquen, Aguadilla. Caja 3, Distrito Aguadilla, Registro Central de Esclavos, 1870. FS Film #00813668 https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSK3-C3Q5-3?i=764&cat=612874

[4] Rafael L López Valdes, "Bilal al Sudan", *Africanos de Cuba*. Centro de Estudios Avanzados del Caribe, 2002, 41-80; 50-51.

[5] A list of transcribed entries for twelve enslaved people born in Africa compiled from the first Libro de Defunciones at Nuestra Señora de la Monserrate, appears in my blogpost "African Ancestors in Moca, Puerto Rico, 1852-1859" 18 January 2018. https://latinogenealogyandbeyond.com/blog/african-ancestors-in-moca/

[6] Jorge Chinea, "Child Trafficking in Puerto Rico at the Closing of the African Slave Trade: The Young Captives of the Slaver Majesty, 1859-1865." *Revista Brasileira do Caribe*, vol. 17, núm. 32, enero-junio, 2016, pp. 59-98.

[7] "A partir del año 1798 se comienza a ver un aumento considerable en todos los grupos de personas clasificadas como negros, mulatos y negros libres. El grupo de esclavos negros aumentó a 17 individuos; los esclavos mulatos a 35 y los negros libres a 37 personas. Estos números representaban el 15.9% de la población de Moca."

Antonio Nieves Méndez, *Historia de un pueblo: Moca 1772-2000*. Ediciones Aymaco, lulu.com 2008. Also note that DNA makes visible aspects of the population that counted as *'blancos'* were in fact more ethnically diverse and inclusive of Indigenous ancestry than previously understood.

Of the 21 Africans in this group from 1870, women outnumbered men. Only 8 were men, and 13 women; 20 are listed as laborers. Of the total, five lived in Aguada, one in Isabela and the remaining 15 were in Moca, with 12 in Aceituna, 1 each in Rocha, Capa and Cruz, and 2 in nearby Mamey, Aguada. Six people were manumitted, and one, Dominga, age 57 (bca. 1813) died before the process was complete. Her enslaver was the Compania D. Juan Pellot et Sucesores, which held eight people, all women, followed by Los Amell Julia et Compania with four. These two companies held the majority of people on the entire list, with a smaller number of people by this time compared to the *Censo de esclavos* of 1826 and 1846.

Prior to 1870, among the smaller slaveholders with Africans were Francisco Cirilo Acevedo and María Norberta Cardona, with two persons respectively, and D. Cristóbal Benejan Serra and Pedro Badillo with one person each.

Table : Africans in Caja 4, Registro de Esclavos 1870

1	No. Cedula	Nombre	Edad	Nac.	Sexo	Notas	Local	Dueno	Origen		Trabajo		Hijos		Fecha Reg	No. cedula
2	3566	Juana	82	1788	H	---	Rural	Jose Burdon	Africa	soltera	Labradora	Rocha	---	Moca	Mar 1, 1870	3566
3	3599	Manuela	72	1798	H	Manumitido Ene 8 1871	Rural	D. Jose Anto. Caban	Africa	soltera	Labradora	Capa	1 hijo se ignora	Moca	Mar 1, 1870	3599
4	3783	Victoria	63	1807	H	---	Rural	D. J.n Pellot et Sucessores	Africa	soltera	Labradora	Aceituna	2 hijos: Agustin y Victoriana	Moca	Mar 1,1870	3783
5	3720	Rufina	59	1811	H	Baja por manumision Agosto 17	Rural	D. J.n Pellot et Sucessores	Africa	soltero	Labradora	Aceituna	–	Moca	Mar 1,1870	3720
6	3721	Merced	59	1811	H	Baja por manumision Agosto 17	Rural	D. J.n Pellot et Sucessores	Africa	soltero	Labradora	Aceituna	–	Moca	Mar 1,1870	3721
7	3723	Paulina	59	1811	H	Baja por manumision Agosto 17	Rural	D. J.n Pellot et Sucessores	Africa	soltero	Labradora	Aceituna		Moca	Mar 1,1870	3723
8	3719	Gregoria	57	1813	H	---	Rural	D. J.n Pellot et Sucessores	Africa	soltero	---	Aceituna	–	Moca	Mar 1,1870	3719
9	3722	Martina	57	1813	H	---	Rural	D. J.n Pellot et Sucessores	Africa	soltero	Labradora	Aceituna	2 hijos: Dolores y Hipolito	Moca	Mar 1,1870	3722
10	3879	Dominga	57	1813	H	Baja por fallecimiento	Rural	Los Srs Amell Julia y Ca	Africa	Soltera	Labradora	Mamey	–	Aguada	Mayo 4, 1870 emendado	3879
11	3764	Florentina	56	1814	H	---	Rural	D. J.n Pellot et Sucessores	Africa	soltera	Labradora	Aceituna	6 hijos: Saturnina, Luciano, Marta, Marcelo, Pio, y Juana	Moca	Mar 1,1870	3764
12	3767	Nieves	53	1817	H	---	Rural	D. J.n Pellot et Sucessores	Africa	soltera	Labradora	Aceituna	3 hijos: Gabriel, Agueda y Clemencia	Moca	Mar 1,1870	3767
13	3915	Alejo	52	1818	V	–	Rural	D. Francisco Pagan vecino de Anasco	Africa	Soltero	Labrador	Galateo Alto		Ysabela	Mayo 4,1870	3915
14	3986	Alejo	52	1818	V	–	Urbano	D. Pedro Badillo	Africa	Soltero	Labrador	Pueblo		Aguada	Mayo 27 1870	3986 [704]
15	3664	Pedro	45	1825	V	---	Rural	Da. Ma. Norberta Polanco Cardona	Africa	soltero	Labrador	Aceituna		Moca	Mar 1,1870	3664
16	2873	Lucia	42	1828	H		Rural	Los Srs Amell Julia y Ca	Africa	Soltera	Labradora	Mamey		Aguada	May 4,1870	2873
17	3532	Santiago	42	1828	V		Rural	D. Cristobal Benejans y Serra	Africa	soltero	Labrador	la Cruz	4 hijos: Felis, Eulalia, Carmen y Eugenio	Moca	Mar 1, 1870	3532
18	3899	Ventura	42	1828	V	–	Rural	Los Srs Amell Julia y Ca	Africa	Soltero	Labrador	Mamey		Aguada	Mayo 4,1870	3899
19	3815	Santiago	40	1830	V	Manumitido Oct 8 1870	Rural	D. Franco. Cirilo Acevedo y Gonzalez	Africa	soltero	Labrador	Aceituna	–	Moca	Mayo 1,1870	3815
20	3661	Manuel	38	1832	V	---	Rural	Da. Maria Norberto Polanco Cardona	Africa	soltero	Labrador	Aceituna		Moca	Mar 1,1870	3661
21	3816	Miguel	36	1834	V	Manumitido Oct 8 1870	Rural	D. Franc.o C. Acevedo Gonzalez	Africa	soltero	Labrador	Aceituna	–	Moca	Mayo 1,1870	3816
22	3881	Estefana	29	1841	H	Pasa a Folio 4283 [empieza Item 2]	Rural	Los Srs Amell Julia y Ca	Africa	Soltera	Labradora	Aceituna	4 hijos: Aurelio, Candida, Ceferino, y Pedro Alcantera Hilario	Aguada	Mayo 4,1870	3881

Table 1: Africans in Caja 4, Registro de esclavos 1870

Every person is noted as 'soltero' or 'soltera' - single.[8] The holding of enslaved born on the island was much larger and reflective of an enslaved population born in Puerto Rico. Seven had families, or at the very least, had offspring listed on their

[8] 3879. Dominga, 57. Barrio Mamey, Aguada. Caja 4, Distrito Aguadilla, Registro Central de Esclavos, 1870. FS Film #00813667.

document. Across the total of 493 documents in Caja 4, 252 were male and 241 were female; almost half, 210, were children and infants.

Given the youthfulness of the population and the range of skin tones, obviously something more was going on than simply 'natural increase'. Recent historical work by scholars such as Thomas A. Foster, Gregory D. Smithers, Daina Ramey Berry among others, begin to peel back a historical veneer that covered a process that Foster described as "a history of how the conditions of slavery gave rise to a variety of forms of sexual assault and exploitation that touched the lives of many men, their families and their communities."[9] How then, do we read the lives on these *cédulas*? How much choice existed for the individuals that appear as parents? A host of questions that go beyond the economic calculations of labor and into how sexual assault and exploitation operated across the rural areas where these plantations and farms existed. This in turn shapes the nature and content of the oral histories and the family genealogies of the region. An overview of the business of D. Juan Pellot and his network helps to fill in some detail about the context of their lives in Northwest Puerto Rico.

D. Juan Pellot: The business of sugar, coffee & people

In 1804, the Pellot (Peugeot) siblings, Juan, Pedro, Carlos and Mariana, arrived in Puerto Rico from Fuenterrabia in the Basque region of the Atlantic Pyrenees. By 1810, Pedro Pellot became a partner in the company formed by D. Pedro Abadía and D Martin Lorenzo de Acevedo. Arriving to Moca just a year after the Pellots, was Pedro Manuel Abadia, former owner of the hacienda Nuestra Señora del Rosario in Santo Domingo, who brought his wife and several enslaved people to Puerto Rico. Seeing an opportunity, Pellot quickly joined the partnership formed by Abadía and Lorenzo de Acevedo. At that time, Pellot's slaveholding extended to only seven

[9] Further consideration and analysis is needed to understand the trafficking in enslaved children, the dimensions of sexual violence that occurred in the nineteenth century. Little work has been done on this in Puerto Rico. Although the issue is raised briefly in Stark's recent work "Perhaps acts of sexual violence (rape) against enslaved women by owners and/ or other males account for some of the illegitimate births." a need for more research remains. David M. Stark, *Slave Families and the Hato Economy in Puerto Rico*. University Press Florida, 2015, p141. Grappling with the topic in terms of family history and genealogy is becoming more frequent as a result of DNA testing. See Ellen Fernandez-Sacco, "Slavery, Freedom & Revisioning Family History: The Babilonia Family." *The Baobab Tree: Journal of the African American Genealogical Society of Northern California*, Pt1, Spring 2017, 8-11, 13. Pt 2, 20-23; Reprinted in *The California Nugget*, California Genealogical Society, Pt1, Spring 2018, 13-19; Pt 2, Spring 2019, 17-21. For trafficking during the mid-nineteenth century see Jorge Chinea, "Slavery and Child Trafficking in Puerto Rico at the Close of the African Slave Trade: The Young Captives of the Slaver Majesty, 1859-1865" *Revista Brasileira do Caribe*, vol. 17, núm. 32, enero-junio, 2016, pp. 59-98. Recent historical works to take note of include: Thomas A. Foster, Introduction, *Rethinking Rufus: Sexual Violations of Enslaved Men*, University of Georgia Press, 2019.; Gregory D. Smithers, *Slave Breeding: Sex, Violence and Memory in African American History*. University Press of Florida, 2012; Daina Ramey Berry, *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh: The Value of the Enslaved from Womb to Grave, in the Building of a Nation*. Beacon Press, 2017. Hilary McD. Beckles, "Property Rights in Pleasure: The Marketing of Enslaved Women's Sexuality," in Roderick McDonald, ed., *West Indian Accounts: Essays on the History of the British Caribbean and the Atlantic Economy in Honor of Richard Sheridan* (Kingston, The Press, University of the West Indies. 1996), pp. 169-187. Oral histories for the Southern US appear from compiled WPA interviews in Donna Wyant Newell's *I Was a Slave Series: Chapter 4: The Breeding of Slaves*. American Legacy Books, 1996; one account for Puerto Rico appears in Luis Díaz Soler's *Historia del esclavitud negra en Puerto Rico*. Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 2005 (1953).

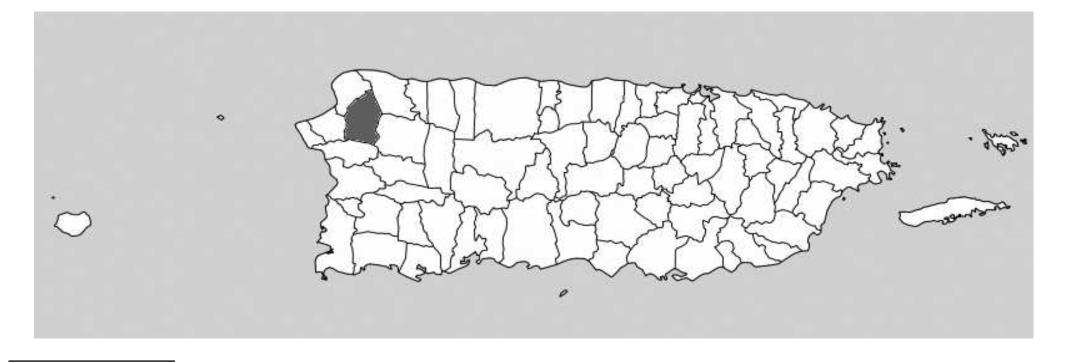
people; before 1870 six decades later, the total number of enslaved persons held by Pellot in 1849 was 125 souls.[10] This acquisition is symbolic of the overall growth of the use of enslaved labor at the rise of sugar and coffee cultivation in Puerto Rico going into the nineteenth century.

PUEBLO DE la Moca BARRIO DE la Aceytuna

ESTADO que manifiesta las haciendas que hai en el espresado barrio presentadas una por una, nombre y clase de ellas, el de los dueños á que pertenecen, núm. de esclavos de su dotacion, el de la jente asalariada que en ellas trabajan, caballerías y cuerdas de tierra que tiene cada una, espresándose cuantas son de monte, cuantas de cultivo, y cuantas de pasto, y espresion de si prospera, se sostiene ó atrasa, con lo demas que se espresa.

D. Juan Pellot's Hacienda Yrurena Barrio Aceytuna, Pueblo de la Moca. Censo y Riqueza, 1847, Caja 508, Fondo de Gob. Espanoles. AGPR Photo: E. Fernández-Sacco

By 1847, D. Juan Pellot's Hacienda Yrurena was among the three largest plantations in Barrio Aceituna, surpassed by that of D. Francisco C. Acevedo and D. Carlos de la Rosa in terms of land, yet he was the largest enslaver in the area. Note other plantation owners of French nationality: D. Luis Antonio Maisonave Duprey, born in Port au Prince, Haiti to parents from Ossau, Bearn, Pyrenees-Atlantique and owner of Hacienda La Caridad; Da Juana María Capdeville Clanes, wife of D. Juan Bautista Doumeng Casana of Hacienda La Josefa, both from Saint-Grandeaux, Haut-Garonne, France.[11] These were emigres with ties to Saint-Domingue, and the disruption caused by the uprising of the enslaved there, was part of the reason they wound up in Puerto Rico.

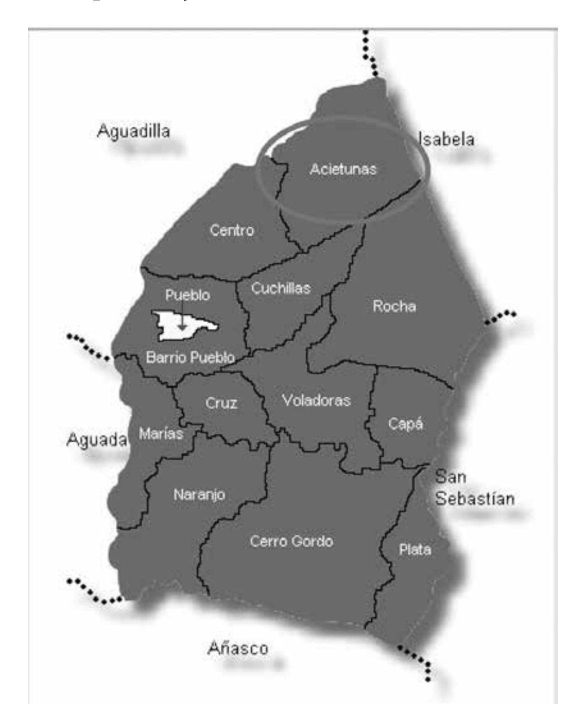


Map of Puerto Rico, showing location of Moca. Based on File:USA Puerto Rico location map.svg made by NordNordWest, highlighted by Dr. Blofeld - Based on File:USA Puerto Rico location map.svg

[10] Antonio Nieves Méndez, *Historia de un pueblo: Moca 1772-2000*. Ediciones Aymaco, lulu.com 2008

[11] Dra. Haydée Reichard de Cancio, "El apellido De La Rosa- Troncos del Noroeste" PReb.com, http://www.preb.com/socios/geneal/delarosa.htm; R. Reichard Sapia, "Historia de Aguadilla y Sus Familias: la Familia Maisonnave." n.d. "Cédula testamentaria conjunta de D.Juan Bautista Doumeng y Da.Juana María Capdeville 9-26-1832 en el barrio de Ceiba Baja juridicción del pueblo de Aguadilla…" Carlos Encarnación Navarro, Caja 1337, Serie Cédulas Testamentarias, Pueblo Aguadilla, 1824-1825, Escribanos otros funcionarios.

At the time Pedro Pellot obtained his naturalization papers in 1816, he lived in Moca, some twelve years since his arrival. He served his first term as Mayor (*Alcalde Ordinario*) of Moca until June 1814; six years later, he served a second term as Mayor from 1822-1823.[12] He was the largest taxpayer and enslaver in the municipality. Until 1836, D. Pedro Pellot (Peugeot) and later his brother Juan Pellot, oversaw the the business of running Hacienda Yrurena in Barrio Aceituna, Moca.[13] This close relationship between property and the holding of municipal posts helped to reinforce an economy dependent on a captive labor force for the next six decades.[14] The laws and codes also dictated and shaped social relationships themselves, and the church reinforced them by as a repository of vital records that confirmed caste and status.



Location of Barrio Aceitunas, Moca.

Pellot's hacienda was established with the purchase of two *caballearías* of land (400 cuerdas) from D. Martín Lorenzo de Acevedo in 1816. By 1825, he received title to his surveyed and registered land, which now comprised some 688 *cuerdas*. These later purchases were accomplished as a *socio* or member of a company that consisted

[12] Antonio Nieves Méndez, *Historia de un pueblo, Moca*. "Tabla XXI Lista de alcaldes de Moca desde 1772 al 1900." p.398, p.247. Juan González de la Cruz substituted for Pellot as he stepped down due to illness; González served as Mayor until Jun 1819. The municipal administration was composed of the regidores José de Jesús Méndez, Ciprián de Rivera, José Hernández, José Cual, Pablo Corchado as *sindico* and Jesús López as *secretario*. AGPR Fondo de Gobernadores, Caja 508.

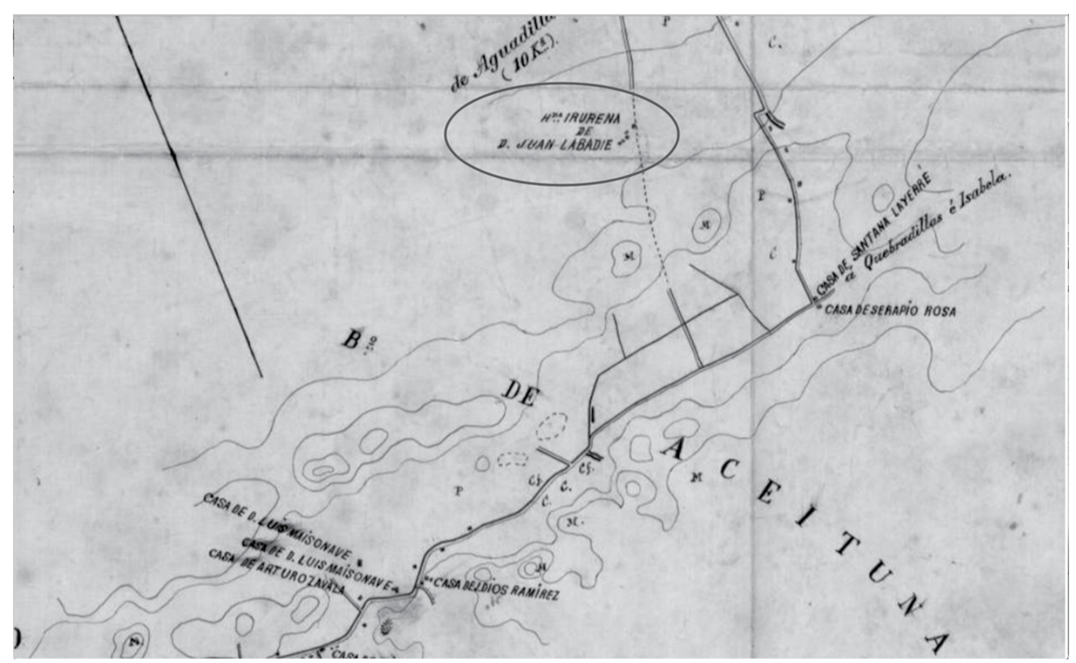
[13] Dra. Haydée Reichard de Cancio, "Las verdaderas heroínas de la caña: Las Negras Esclavas." Unpublished paper; Nieves Méndez, *Historia de un pueblo: Moca 1772-2000*. p. 247, 398.

[14] Close familial ties existed between church and administration, as with the family of Martín Lorenzo de Acevedo. He served as *Alférez Real* of Aguada, *Teniente de Guerra* of Moca 1792-1810, and finally *Alcalde* of Moca; of his 17 children with Da. María Juana del Rosario González y Vives de Santiago, his son Vic. D. Pedro Pablo Lorenzo de Acevedo (1779-1843) was the parish administrator for Luquillo, 1806 and in 1833; another son, Prsb. José Antonio Lorenzo de Acevedo (1794-1856) became a priest in 1853. Daughters married into the elite military families of the *partido* de Aguada.

of Pellot, his brother, Pedro Manuel Abadía and Martín Lorenzo de Acevedo. He later purchased 75 enslaved persons and 700 acres from his partner's Pedro Manuel Abadía y Valencia's widow, Yomara Errea. As Abadía had no heirs, he provided Pellot with this opportunity, and with this purchase, Pellot had control over the entire hacienda, which he named Yrurena.[15] While it covered a large area of land, like many farms and plantations, only a fraction was cultivated.



Hacienda Labadie, front facade, main building. Photo: E. Fernandez-Sacco, 2007.



Hacienda Irurena - 1889 Map of Barrio Aceituna, Moca - Isabela. - Isabela. Mapa Militar, ADNPR.

[15] *Ibíd*, Reichard de Cancio; Nieves Méndez,

By 1847, the hacienda had grown to 835 *cuerdas* overseen by his brother, D. Juan Pellot, and 105 enslaved persons worked the land and buildings of Hacienda Yruena.[16] At a distance from the house, they lived in an area called "Petit Guinea" as a number of the enslaved purchased early on had their origin there.[17] In 1825 Pellot and another *hacendado*, Luis del Río, obtained Royal licenses and purchased 300 enslaved Africans mostly born in Guinea from a French vendor on the island of Guadeloupe.[18] Some of the enslaved on the Pellot hacienda spoke French as they were brought from Saint Domingue (presently Haiti), and reached Puerto Rico in the decade after the uprising began in 1791.[19] Martina, grandmother of Cornelia Pellot, the wife and then widow of the plantation's second owner, and eventually owner of Hacienda Yrurena, was born in Africa about 1813.



Location of Hacienda Labadie 'Palacete Los Moreau' in Barrio Aceituna, Moca. There are visible remains of structures where 'Petit Guinea' was located adjacent to the Riesgo de Moca, the irrigation system still in use today. Screenshot: Google Maps, Sept. 2019.

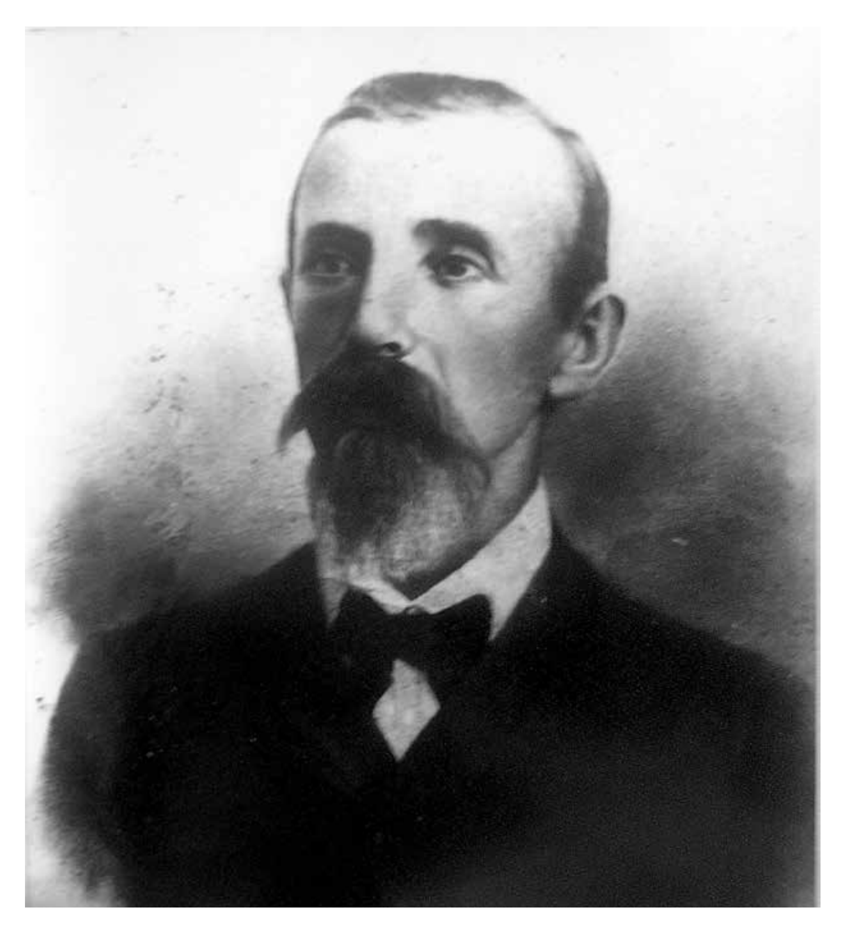
Juan Pellot retired and departed to Sainte-Adresse, Seine-Maritime, Normandy, France. An ancient city located near the English Channel, it was the same place that served painter Claude Monet as a subject for several landscapes painted during that decade. Not all expatriates returned to France. Juan Pellot died in 1860, and in 1868

[16] Nieves Méndez, *Historia de un pueblo: Moca 1772-2000*. n.203

[17] Dr. Haydée Reichard de Cancio, "Las verdaderas heroínas- Libreta y papeles de esclavos de la Hacienda Irurena."

[18] Ricardo R. Camuñas-Madera, "Las relaciones entre Puerto Rico y las mantillas francesas." *Revista Universidad de América*, December 1998, 10:2, 13-19, 17. Carmelo Rosario Natal, "Puerto Rico y la república Dominicana: Emigraciones durante el periodo revolucionario: 1791-1850." *Revista Universidad de América*, 7:1. Mayo1995, 107-114.

[19] It is possible that some of the enslaved already spoke French prior to being sold in Saint-Domingue.



Juan Labadie Larre (1836-1894), from photograph ca. 1880s on display at Hacienda Labadie. Photo: E. Fernández-Sacco, 2007.

the Pellot family sold the property to Juan Labadie Larre, who married Cornelia Pellot, daughter of the African born Martina, who once worked on the plantation.

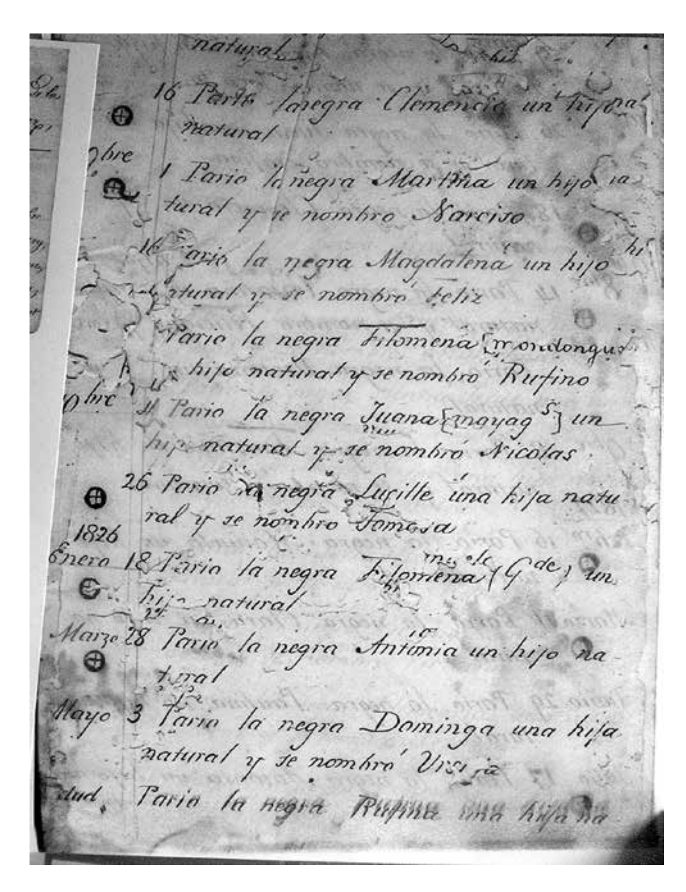
The notebook of *esclavas paridoras*, 1823-1873

Recently, Dr. Haydée Reichard de Cancio wrote about a manuscript in her collection, a three part book of births entitled '*esclavas paridoras*' (birthing slave women), partly written in French and later in Spanish between 1823 and 1873, in which the Pellots kept record of date, name of mother, child and date of death, annotated with a system of symbols and abbreviations.[20] The first segment included some 57 infants who died at or shortly after, birth. It was a calculated business, as children in good health followed the legal status of its mother, so slave holders saw keeping enslaved women pregnant as a financial advantage.

This page from late 1825-1826, reproduced and on display at the Hacienda Labadie, recorded the following births, and deaths under the Pellot enslavers, marked via a small circle with a cross inside. There are two details regarding origin, Filomena as 'mondongue' is Mandinka and Juana was purchased in Mayagüez. Some of the stillborn have no names, while others died soon after:

---

[20] Dra. Haydée Reichard de Cancio, "Las verdaderas heroínas de la caña: Las Negras Esclavas."


natural
16 Pario la negra Clemencia un hijo na-
tural
7bre 1 Pario la negra Martha un hijo na-
tural y se nombro Narciso
16 Pario la negra Magdalena un hijo
natural y se nombro Feliz
Pario la negra Filomena {mondongue}
hijo natural y se nombro Rufino
9bre 4 Pario la negra Juana {mayag.s} un
hijo natural y se nombro Nicolas
26 Pario la negra Lucille una hija natu-
ral y se nombro Tomasa
1826
Enero 18 Pario la negra Filomena (Gde) un
hijo natural
Marzo 28 Pario la negra Antonia un hijo na-
tural
Mayo 3 Pario la negra Dominga una hija
natural y se nombro Ursula
dud Pario la negra Rufina una hija na

Page from the libreta esclavas paridoras on view at Hacienda Labadie, Photo: E. Fernandez-Sacco, 2007

<u>1825</u>

+ 16 [Sep] - Pario la negra Clemencia un hijo natural
+ 1 O'bre - Pario la negra Martha un hijo natural y se nombro Narciso.
16 - Pario la negra Magdalena un hijo natural y se nombró Feliz
[roto]- Pario la negra Filomena [mondongue] hijo natural y se nombro Rufino
No.bre 4 - Pario la negra Juana [mayagu.s] un hijo natural y se nombro Nicolas
+ 26- Pario la negra Lucille una hija natural y se nombro Tomasa

<u>1826</u>

+ Enero 18 - Pario la negra Filomena (Gde) un hijo natural
+ Marzo 28- Pario la negra Antonia un hijo natural
Mayo 3- Pario la negra Dominga una hija natural y se nombro Ursula
dud - Pario la negra Rufina una hija na[tural] [21]

Infant mortality was high, as the symbols on the edges of the pages indicate; of the ten births listed here, only five survived. Of the women and children named here, I can only find one among the certificates in 1870: Rufina, a small woman with dark eyes and skin, tightly curled hair, flat nose and large mouth, born in Africa about 1811 and granted manumission on August 17, 1870 from the firm D. Juan Pellot et Sucesores. If she is the same person, she was about fifteen years old when she gave birth to her unnamed stillborn child in 1826.[22]

---

[21] Transcription of page, Libreta esclavas paridoras, 1825-1826. Hacienda Labadie, Aceitunas, Moca, Puerto Rico. Photo: E. Fernández-Sacco, 2007.

[22] Rufina, 59. Folio 3720. *Registro de esclavos,* 17 Aug 1870. Caja 4, AGPR Gobernadores Españoles, FS Film # 008138867 https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSK3-Z3SY-6?i=458&cat=612874

Cédula for Rufina, 59. Folio No. 3720, Barrio Aceituna, Moca. Registro de esclavos, 17 Aug 1870. Caja 4, FS Film 008138867.

Rufina's certificate leaves us with so many questions about her and her family history; given the list of women of the *esclavas paridoras*, what we have is an inventory of forced reproduction, with values later assigned to the survivors. Additional records show, as do the *cédulas* of Caja 4, that most of the dozens of children born at the start of gradual emancipation in this Northwestern district, many were mixed, listed as mulato; according to social hierarchy of the time, the mother was regarded as 'de mala sangre' 'of bad blood', and as such could be regarded as prostitutes. Social mobility was limited, but that did not stop some, like Cornelia Pellot from becoming part of the landed elite. As Reichard points out, reality runs contrary to that regard. These women are the source of labor, the heroines of agriculture responsible for so much under the system of enslavement.

Three Generations, Ten People: Aguadilla, 1870

Another group of details that emerges are certificates that contain two or three generations, demonstrating the presence of family structures at the end of official enslavement. For example, the *cédula* for Benancia ties three generations together despite enslavement. She is 35 years old, short with reddish skin, tightly curled hair, dark eyes and wide nose, the daughter of Casiano and Antonia. Also listed are the couple's seven grandchildren- Eleuteria, Celestino, Rafaela, Abelina, Victoria, Eladio and Santiago. There is a separate document for Juana Francisca, her eighth child, born 2 April 1870 to Benancia,

Cédula for Benancia, 35 of Barrio Rocha, Moca. No. 3568. Registro de Esclavos, Caja 4. AGPR Gobernadores Españoles, FS Film # 008138867 FS.org https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSK3-Z33D-C?i=308&cat=612874

Unusual for the number of people listed, this document is silent on the struggles and limitations placed on their partnerships and marriages, their actions, in short, experiences that differed from marriage and family among free people. As in the American South, bondsmen were unable to protect their partners from physical and sexual abuse and could be retaliated against for helping them. Still others steered clear of marriage as too troublesome to pursue beneath conditions they labored under as enslaved people.[23] These factors shaped the lives and by turn, the kinds of documentation available for these ancestors. While there are 26 couples listed among the people inventoried in Caja 4, were they couples by choice, or by an enslaver's preference?

Benancia's eight children raises questions about the details of their daily lives—how she was able to support her children, whether her relationships were coercive or consensual, even if she were able to care for her children on a daily basis. Apparently, infants were cared for separately, as Juana Francisca is in Capa, rather than Rocha, as Benancia's own document indicates; the plantation at that time extended across the border of both barrio Capa and Rocha. Did her parents, Casiano and Antonia live on the same plantation? Did her children? The registration certificate for Benancia lists her occupation as an agricultural laborer, who worked in a rural area of Moca. While the document establishes that family ties existed, what did that mean for them? Aside from Benancia, her grandparents and siblings' situation remains un-

[23] Deborah Gray White, *Ar'n't I a Woman? Female Slaves in the Plantation South.* Revised Ed, 1999, 147, 152-153.

clear — either they gained freedom, were sold away or died before 1870, as there are no additional certificates for them in Caja 4. If extant, parish and notarial records can supplement the information and provide additional context.

La Finca Palmar Llano de los Lassalle

Before 1870, Benancia's extended family of ten lived in Barrio Rocha, a rural, elevated area in the municipality of Moca. Prior to the transfer of their ownership to the state via the Ley Moret, they were among the people held in bondage by D. Marcelino Lassalle. Looking to records on Lassalle's plantation helps orient one to the enslaved world of labor. D. Marcelino Lassalle, along with his wife Da. Angelina Zavala, owned commercial coffee farms in Barrio Rocha and Capa, Moca.

As barrio Rocha sat on higher cooler land at the start of the Cordillera, this area lent itself to coffee cultivation. The oldest plantations in Moca were located near the Rio Culebrinas, and a pier was built near the town to facilitate transport of crops.[24] Some 61 farms and a hacienda covered the ward in 1847. Between 1830-1850, enslaved labor remained an integral part of the agricultural growth in coffee and sugar, most of it shipped out of the western port of Mayagüez.[25] Times were difficult as the market fluctuated.

The investment in plantations by the Lassalles began at the turn of the century, soon after their arrival after fleeing the uprising in Saint-Domingue, in which 6% of the white population left the island and hundreds arrived along the eastern seaboard seeking refuge; some ten thousand arrived in Louisiana alone. Together with family and enslaved, Juan Bautista Lassalle left his family's business in Guarico [Cap Haitien], went to Baltimore and arrived in Puerto Rico by 1801. He was able to invest in a plantation in Guaynabo and become a partner, or socio, in a company that pooled resources for large purchases of property, human, material and land. By 1816, with the policy of the Real Cédula de Gracias (Royal Decree of Graces), members of the Lassalle family were able to benefit from its provisions and obtain a letter of domicile (carta de domicilio) that recognized them as Spanish subjects.

Work arrangements on coffee plantations were different than sugar plantations in terms of the schedule of planting and harvest; coffee picking was seasonal work that lasted two or three months, and distant haciendas built *Cuarteles de Peones* or *Barracones* to house laborers.[26] Then the bean was processed to strip it of its shell, fermented, dried, then roasted, bagged and carried off to market. Over time, each phase of coffee production went from processing by hand to some form of mechanization. Many of the enslaved female laborers that appear in the cedulas worked in coffee cultivation and harvesting.

In 1847, Lassalle's farm, Palmar Llano in Rocha consisted of some ten acres for his main crop, worked by seven enslaved people; the largest area, 182 acres, was

---

[24] Luis Pumarada O'Neill, "La antigua región cafetalera de Moca quedaba en las cercanías del Río Culebrinas. Cerca del pueblo llegó a haber un embarcadero [Ramón Vale, entrevista, 1990]." *Contexto Histórico del Café en Puerto Rico*. p21 n. 16.

[25] Luis Pumarada O'Neill, *Contexto Histórico del Café en Puerto Rico.* 19.

[26] Pumarada O'Neill, 71. "Cuando la hacienda fue aumentando sus cultivos de café comenzó a necesitar mano de obra adicional durante la época de la recogida del grano. Para la hacienda aislada esto requirió la construcción de Cuarteles de Peones o Barracones para albergar a los recogedores que venían a trabajar por dos o tres meses durante la cosecha.

pasture.[27] This was a small coffee farm in comparison to that of larger plantation owners, such as Francisco Acevedo, who had some 49 acres worked by 29 enslaved people and 25 salaried laborers, or Juan Pellot, who had 85 acres, 105 enslaved persons and no salaried labor working the *cafetal*.[28]

Overall, the labor producing export crops whether coffee or sugar was done by enslaved rather than salaried labor, a trend which intensified after 1791, when the uprising in Haiti sank its dominance over coffee and sugar production in the world market. This sudden disappearance of that production was seen as an opportunity in Puerto Rico and other countries involved in importation. As a result, coffee and sugar cultivation expanded, in part due to the French emigres who reestablished themselves on the west side of Puerto Rico in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, among them members of the Lassalle, Pellot, Beauchamp families. They had connections with the European market, a source of necessary credit that also served to displace the criollo population in terms of land and property rights by bringing over families from their countries to work as dependents and hired mayordomos who worked their haciendas and businesses.[29] Many were absentee landowners, and the largest haciendas had a mayordomo who lived in his own *Casa de Mayordomo* on site year round, apart from the *Casa Grande* (Big House), whose owners and their families lived in town or even out of the country. Slave quarters were built behind the big house, closer to the fields.

By 1873, Da. Angelina Zavala was among a list of slaveholders together with a small group of newly manumitted persons recognized by the King from municipalities across the island. Only two slaveowners were from Moca: Da. Angelina Zavala, who manumitted Ana Dominga, and D. Francisco J. Gonzalez, who manumitted Juana. No ages for the freed women are given.[30] Da. Angelina (or Ángela) Zavala appears among the slaveholders in the set of 1870 *cédulas* transcribed here, with one document for Rufino 29 (b.1841) son of José Carmen and Magdalena, and the other for Dominga 27, (b.1843) daughter of Tomas y Maria Juana. Her husband, D. Marcelino Lassalle held Benancia and Benancia's daughter, Juana Francisca, born in April 1870, amidst the process of inventorying enslaved people that was happening across the island.[31]

Details and questions: Age, phenotype, law and ownership

The *cédulas* also reveal the ownership of children six to seven months old; of people whose skin color ranged from '*blanco*' (white) to '*negro retinto*' (deep black),

[27] Antonio Nieves Méndez, *Historia de un pueblo: Moca 1772-2000*. Ediciones Aymaco, lulu.com 2008, 53, 156.

[28] Laird W. Bergad, Table 2.15, Land Use and Labor on Commercial Farms, Moca, 1847. AG-PR-RSGPR, Political and Civil Affairs, Censo y Riqueza 1836-1839, Box 14 Entry 9, Moca. Estado que manifiesta las haciendas que hai en el espresso pueblo, noviembre 1847." *Coffee and the Growth of Agrarian Capitalism in Nineteenth-Century Puerto Rico*. Princeton University Press, 1983, 58. Most of the 1847 list is transcribed & appears as an appendix in Antonio Nieves Méndez, *Historia de un pueblo: Moca 1772-2000*., 2008.

[29] *Pueblo de la Moca. Censo y Riqueza, 1847*, Caja 508, Fondo de Gob. Españoles.

[30] "Doña Angelina Zavala, de Moca, a su esclava Ana Dominga." Lista de propietarios de esclavos felicitados por el Rey por haber manumitido sus esclavos. 30 Aug 1872-26 Apr 1873; Archivo Histórico Nacional A.H.N.(Madrid, España). Sección Ultramar. Leg. 5103, Expediente 65, Doc. 1. Lista en. PReb.com

[31] Benancia, 35. Folio 3568, Caja 4, Distrito Aguadilla, Registro Central de Esclavos, 1870. FS Film #00813667

descriptors that visually spill over binary categories of race. When one looks more closely, 'blackness' associated with slavery in Puerto Rico is similar to the United States, in that the enslaved were not simply people with dark skin. As enslavement existed since the island's founding, its complex of networks, human and mercantile swept many Indigenous peoples into the industrial machinery of slave labor, and as a result many today share Afro-Native ancestry. This too is a history becoming more visible for many in the United States and across the Caribbean.

Aside from the question of freedom raised by the *ley Moret (The Moret Law)*, documents among the *protocolos notariales* (notary documents) at the Archivo General de Puerto Rico the enslaved frequently appear in these documents as a form of ready money. In a sense, these *cédulas* were no different, even as they mark the start of a gradual abolition. At emancipation, the government effectively became the owner of all enslaved people on the island, and the *cédulas* were evidence of that exchange of ownership. Owners faithful to Spain's colonial government were paid 125 pesetas per person, per certificate. Those who participated in the recent acts of resistance such as the *El Grito de Lares* (1868) were excluded from indemnification according to the terms of the *Ley Moret* which spelled out the terms of this gradual emancipation. As mentioned at the outset of this paper, by 1873, there were still 31,000 people that remained in bondage.

Still other enslaved men gained their freedom for completing a year's military service. Perhaps the most difficult term was the requirement that those deemed minors work for their former masters until the age of 21— adults were required to work for former masters for three years.[32] People were bought and sold up until the time of full emancipation, or could be taken or sold to plantations in Cuba, where freedom finally arrived in 1886. This proximity to the 1885 establishment of the *Registro Civil* in Puerto Rico, makes tracing enslaved ancestors using the data from *Registro de Esclavos* a viable project.

Lost, but not yet found: the 1872 Registro for Northwest PR

For several decades, the volume for District 3's 1872 *Registro de esclavos* has been missing. Some have proposed that it was perhaps misfiled in the many feet of archival stacks in the Archivo General de Puerto Rico (AGPR) or, that the volume was lost or perhaps stolen. The remaining six volumes that cover the remainder of the island were microfilmed by National Archives and Records Administration, along with other items in the massive collection of *Gobernadores Españoles* papers, and the lot was returned to the AGPR. These microfilm reels were also duplicated for the LDS FamilySearch Centers, and the films digitized for Ancestry.com.

---

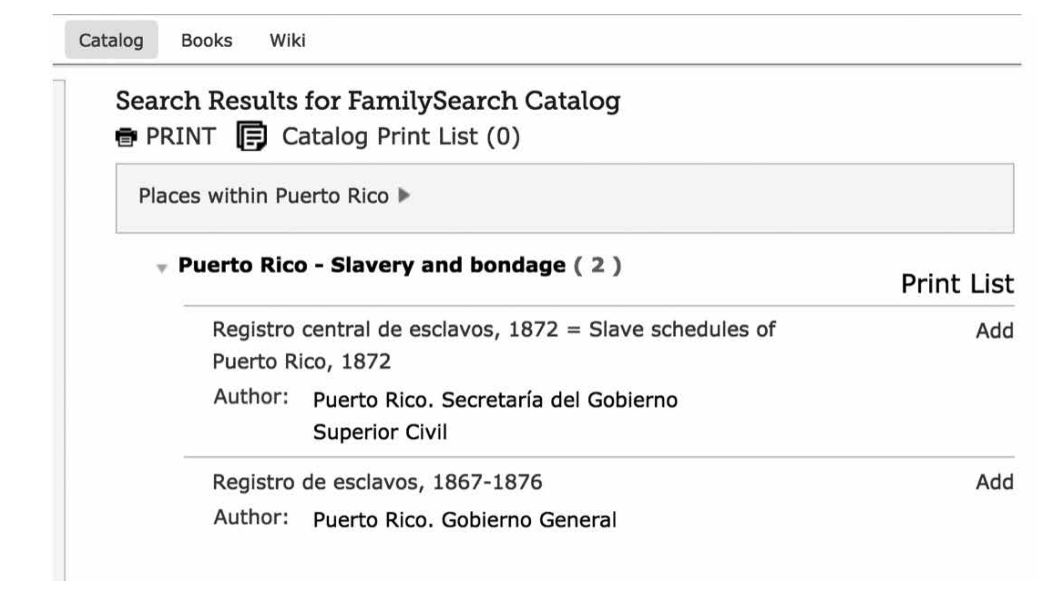
[32] "Artículo 3: Todos los esclavos que hayan servido bajo la bandera española, o de cualquier manera hayan auxiliado a las tropas durante la actual insurrección de Cuba, son declarado libres. Igualmente quedan reconocidos como tales todos los que hubieren sido declarados libres por el Gobernador Superior de Cuba en uso de sus atribuciones. El Estado indemnizará de su valor a los dueños si han permanecido fieles a la causa española: si pertenecieren a los insurrectos no habrá lugar a indemnización." - Ley de 4 de julio de 1870 (Ley Moret). Transcription by Silvia Zavala Trías, 24 Dec. 2004 http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/%7Eponcepr/ley_moret.html

Volumes for the Districts of the 1872 Registro de Esclavos

[Table 2 - Volumes for the Districts of the 1872 Registro de Esclavos]

Volume No.	1872 Registro de Esclavos - Districts of Puerto Rico	Municipalities Covered
1	Capital	Dorado, Naranjito, San Juan, Trujillo Alto, Trujillo Bajo
2	Arecibo	Arecibo, Camuy, Ciales, Hatillo, Manati, Morovis, Quebradillas, Utuado
3	Aguadilla [Missing]	Aguada, Aguadilla, Moca, San Sebastian, Lares, Rincon
4	Mayaguez	Anasco, Cabo Rojo, Mayaguez, Sabana Grande, San German
5	Ponce	Adjuntas, Barranquitas, Barros, Coamo, Guayanilla, Juana Díaz, Peñuelas, Ponce, Yauco
6	Guayama	Aguas Buenas, Arroyo, Caguas, Cayey, Cidra, Guayama, Gurabo, Hato Grande, Sabana del Palmar, Salinas

NARA describes the records as follows: "On June 4, 1870, a law known as the ley Moret was approved, granting freedom to certain categories of slaves, including those over age 60, those belonging to the state, and children of slaves born after September 17, 1868. The law also resulted in the preparation of a central register of slaves. There are now eight volumes of this register, which cover geographical departments 1, 2, and 4 through 6. Slaves are listed under the department and thereunder the municipality in which they resided." These comprise the digitized microfilm volumes of the *Registro Central de Esclavos,* 1872 accessible at: https://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=2774



[Image 12 - Screenshot, two FamilySearch results for Registro de esclavos.]

[Table 3: Cajas 1-9, Cédulas Registro de Esclavos]

Caja	**Locations**	*International*	*FS Catalogue No.*	*# of images*	*URL*
Caja 1	*Dorado' 1868; Toa Alta y Toa Baja, 1871; Bayamón, 1876*	*1511783 items 1-3*	*8138869*	*2439*	*https://www.familysearch.org/search/film/008138869?cat=612874*
Caja 2	*Arecibo, 1868 y 1871*	*1511783 items 4-5*	*8138869*	*—*	*"*
Caja 2	*Utuado y Manatí, 1870*	*1511792*	*8138868*	*2811*	*https://www.familysearch.org/search/film/008138868?cat=612874*
Caja 3	*Aguadilla y Lares, 1870; Manatí, Arecibo, y Utuado, 1871*	*1511792*	*8138868*	*—*	*"*
Caja 4	*San Germán y Añasco, 1868.*	*1511792*	*8138868*	*—*	*"*
Caja 4	*Mayagüez, San Germán; Moca, Aguadilla, Aguada, Isabela, San Sebastián, y Lares, 1870*	*1511797*	*8138867*	*2647*	*https://www.familysearch.org/search/film/008138867?cat=612874*
Caja 5	*Guayanilla y Aibonito, 1868; Juana Díaz, Guayanilla, Barranquitas, y Coamo, 1869*	*1511797*	*8138867*	*—*	*"*
Caja 6	*Peñuelas, Santa Isabel, Barros, y Coamo, 1870; Guayanilla y Juana Díaz, 1871*	*1511799*	*8109230*	*2478*	*https://www.familysearch.org/search/film/008109230?cat=612874*
Caja 7	*Guayama, 1867; Guarabo, Hato Grande, y Cayey, 1869; Naguabo y Maunabo, 1872*	*1511799*	*8109230*	*—*	*"*
Caja 8	*Cayey, Sabana del Palmar, y Juncos, 1868; Arroyo, 1869*	*1511802*	*8138866*	*2542*	*https://www.familysearch.org/search/film/008138866?cat=612874*
Caja 9	*Salinas, Arroyo, y Cayey, 1869; Salinas, Guayama, Hato Grande, y Aguas Buenas, 1870*	*1511802*	*8138866*	*—*	*"*
Caja 5	*Dorado, Trujillo Alto, y Trujillo Bajo, 1872*	*1511802*	*8138866*		*"*
Caja 5	*San Juan, 1872*	*1511803*	*8100616*	*2553*	*https://www.familysearch.org/search/film/008100616?cat=612874*
Caja 6	*Río Grande, Loiza, Guaynabo, Vega Alta, Toa Baja, y Toa Alta, 1872*	*1511803*	*8100616*	*—*	*"*
Caja 1	*Bayamón, Guaynabo, Trujillo Alto, Río Piedras, Toa Alta, Río Grande, Vega Alta, y Loiza, 1873.*	*1511803*	*8100616*	*—*	*"*
Caja 2	*Toa Baja, Corozal, Trujillo Bajo, y Dorado, 1873*	*1511809 items 1-3*	*8138865*	*2553*	*https://www.familysearch.org/search/film/008100616?cat=612874*
Caja 3	*La Carolina, Vega Baja, Toa Alta, y La Carolina, 1873*	*1511809 items 1-3*	*8138865*	*—*	*"*

The Registro's *Cedulas:*

In 1987, FamilySearch microfilmed an additional, separate series of documents from the *Gobernadores Españoles* series on ten reels for the *Registro de esclavos* in Puerto Rico, that span 1867-1876. These comprise the individual documents compiled into the 1872 volumes. These reels, renumbered from the original catalogue entries, were recently uploaded to familySearch.org. Above, Table 2 lists the box, location and film numbers for the collection online, and each cluster of documents varies in terms of initial date, different editions of forms used, and condition, which in some cases documents are compromised by insect, fire or water damage. Regardless, this is a situation where the use of microfilm now some 32 years ago, has preserved papers which may no longer exist after the damage of the category 5 Hurricane Maria in September 2017.[33] The need to preserve and disseminate documents is more urgent than ever.

I transcribed the *cédulas* for Moca from this digitized images of Caja 4, which comprise a portion of the missing third volume.[34] District 3 includes Aguada, Aguadilla, Moca, Isabela, San Sebastián and Lares; yet Caja 4 also includes records for Mayagüez and San Germán that have their own extant volumes. The number of *cédulas* for 1870 documents comprise some 2100 certificates, with details on enslaved people and their families on the cusp of a relative freedom. Here I have transcribed 492 *cédulas* and, also, created a list of the 143 slaveowners listed in them.

Certificates in online repositories & as collectibles

In addition to the NARA and FamilySearch microfilm series, slave certificates from Puerto Rico are present in small caches in a few digital special collections, such as those of the NYPL's Schomburg Collection and other universities that contain almost pristine examples of individual *Certificado de Esclavos*. These documents are included in collections, yet the information they contain are not necessarily extracted into the item descriptions on the website. Also available on eBay are individual certificates for sale, mostly from Arecibo. These were the remains of document sets that were at some point disposed of by local government administration, picked up by locals and sold over time.

The cedula: a tool for reconstructing family histories

This series of cedulas of 1870[35] provide insights into the population of Moca during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, a decade less well known than the studies based on the various municipal documents of two decades earlier, the R*epartos de hacienda*, and the C*enso de altas y bajas,* within the municipal document series compiled in the late 1840s.

---

[33] For an overview of various efforts and activities regarding preservation on the island see: Hilda Teresa Ayala-González, *Puerto Rico's Libraries, Archives and Museums Road to Recovery: A Timeline of Events*. http://scalar.usc.edu/works/prlamrecovery/index

[34] A portion of the 1870 records for Aguadilla are in Caja 2 on a different film. In addition to Caja 4, the film also contains Caja 5: Guayanilla y Aibonito, 1868; Juana Díaz, Guayanilla, Barranquitas, y Coamo, 1869. FS Film No. 008138867 https://www.familysearch.org/search/film/008138867?cat=612874

[35] Caja 4: Film # 008138867

This transcription is a means of accessing the lost 1872 Registro volume for District 3; it can serve as an important tool for reconstructing family histories that can supplement other sources. This can be cross referenced with the *Registro Civil* that begins in 1885, along with various municipal or Federal census, military and parish records. Each certificate consists of a printed form about 6 x 4 inches, with lines for the entry of information, each is assigned a number, and bear the date of March 1 or May 1, 1870. Given the hundreds of certificates organized by barrio (ward), it is likely these were collected over several weeks or months, and later, the individual certificates were transcribed into the final 1872 Registro. This process was repeated for each district.

The documents may be sequential numerically, but the locations after the first hundred or so then begin to move from municipality to municipality first in large and then smaller and smaller batches.

Indexing a population: recording data

The *cédulas* provide basic information on each person, at times listing one or both parents, age, country of birth, and details on appearance that includes height, skin color, hair texture, facial hair, eye color, the shape of nose and size of mouth.

These matter of fact entries are also visceral documents that testify to multiple separations. Many children and infants are listed, some with no parents, no mother, just part of a larger inventory of human property that speaks to an attempted industrialization of the body. What the documents don't speak to are questions such as who cared for these children? How did they and their parents cope with the changes brought after 1868? What advantages were there to living in urban versus rural locations? Given the context of enslavement, it is likely that the children listed without one or both parents resulted from coercive interactions, and this contrasts with a small group of couples and other records that show mothers separated from their children, subdivided among slave owning families by sale or inheritance. Children listed in the cedulas range in age from two months to under the legal age of 22.

What the register represents is the nature of existence within a framework of valuation and labor that seeks to transform humanity into objects. Embedded in this is the resistance to that system, which also produced changes in the conditions of enslavement, as reflected in the laws of 1826, 1847 and finally 1868. Regardless of law and a constant threat of violence, people refused to be subjugated as they moved towards freedom. Each iteration of the law refined the conditions and rules for *libertos*. Post emancipation, the *libertos*' new status was recognized in the Decree No. 44 of 11 April 1874. *La Gaceta de Puerto Rico* published an example of a blank *cédula*, similar to the *certificado de esclavos* and the *libro de jornaleros*, used to keep track of the population. The record sets discussed earlier do not include these post-slavery documents.

Emancipation was not a quick process, lasting formally until 1886. Once free, some in Moca for instance, moved from the rural wards to Barrio Pueblo and established formal and informal businesses, with household often headed by single women who supported their families as cooks, laundresses and dressmakers; many men worked as furniture makers, carpenters, painters or as *jornaleros* (day laborers) in the rapidly growing sugar fields across the island. During the 1870s-1890s, fam-

Puerto-Rico 10 de Abril de 1,874.—JOSE LAUREANO SANZ.

MODELO DE CEDULA QUE SE CITA.

Alcaldia de Cédula de contratacion. Departamento.

Edad	liberto de D. vecino de
Estatura	emancipado por la Ley de 22 de Marzo de 1,873.
Color	Está contratado con D. vecino de
Estado	en el barrio de término de por
Oficio	Tiene la obligacion de residir y pernoctar en la [finca ó casa] del contratista. de de 1,874

CIRCULAR.

Modelo, Cédula de contratación para libertos, 10 April 1874. Gaceta de Puerto Rico. Library of Congress.

ilies traversed the arc from bondage to freedom. They are part of the fabric of the experience of slavery that split and shaped many family histories. May these transcriptions help to rejoin them in the present.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Archivo General de Puerto Rico. Fondo de Gobernadores Españoles. Caja 4. *Registro de esclavos,* 17 Aug 1870. FS Film # 008138867 https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSK3-Z3SY-6?i=458&cat=612874

Secondary Sources/Digital sources

Ayala-González, Hilda Teresa. *Puerto Rico's Libraries, Archives and Museums Road to Recovery: A Timeline of Events*. http://scalar.usc.edu/works/prlamrecovery/index

Bergad, Laird W. *Coffee and the Growth of Agrarian Capitalism in Nineteenth-Century Puerto Rico*. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1983.

Burton, Linda M., Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, Victor Ray, Rose Buckelew & Elizabeth Hordge Freeman. "Critical Race Theories, Colorism and the Decade's Research on Families of Color." http://www.cds.web.unc.edu/files/2013/01/Burton-Bonilla-Silva-Ray-Buckelew-Hordge-Freeman-Decade-Review1.pdf

Camuñas-Madera, Ricardo R. "Las relaciones entre Puerto Rico y las antillas francesas." *Revista Universidad de America*, Year 10, No.2 (December 1998): 13-19.

Chinea, Jorge. "Child Trafficking in Puerto Rico at the Closing of the African Slave Trade: The Young Captives of the Slaver Majesty, 1859-1865." *Revista Brasileira do Caribe*, vol. 17, núm. 32 (enero-junio, 2016): 59-98. http://www.periodicoseletronicos.ufma.br/index.php/rbrascaribe/article/view/5567

Fernández-Sacco, Ellen. "Slavery, Freedom & Revisioning Family History: The Babilonia Family." *The Baobab Tree: Journal of the African American Genealogical Society of Northern California,* Pt1, Spring 2017, 8-11, 13. Pt 2, 20-23; Reprinted in *The California Nugget*, California Genealogical Society, Pt1, Spring 2018, 13-19; Pt 2, Spring 2019, 17-21.

____________. "African Ancestors in Moca, Puerto Rico, 1852-1859" 18 January 2018. https://latinogenealogyandbeyond.com/blog/african-ancestors-in-moca/

Gray White, Deborah. *Ar'n't I a Woman? Female Slaves in the Plantation South.* Revised Ed, WW Norton & Co. 1999 (1985).

López Valdés, Rafael L. *Africanos de Cuba*. Centro de Estudios Avanzados del Caribe, 2004 (2002).

Nieves Méndez, Antonio. *Historia de un pueblo: Moca 1772-2000*. Ediciones Aymaco, lulu.com 2008.

Pumarada O'Neill, Luis. "La antigua región cafetalera de Moca quedaba en las cercanías del Río Culebrinas." *Contexto Historico: Industria Cafetalera en Puerto Rico, 1736-1969.* Oficina de Preservación Histórica de Puerto Rico, Colación, Inc.

Reichard de Cancio, Haydée. "El apellido De La Rosa- Troncos del Noroeste". PReb.com, http://www.preb.com/socios/geneal/delarosa.htm;

____________. "Las verdaderas heroínas de la caña: Las negras esclavas." Unpublished paper, n.d.

Reichard Sapia, R. "Historia de Aguadilla y Sus Familias: la Familia Maisonnave." n.d. Photocopy in author's collection.

Rosario Natal, Carmelo. "Puerto Rico y la Republica Dominicana: emigraciones durante el periodo revolucionario: 1791-1850." *Revista Universidad de America*, 7:1 (mayo 1995): 107-114.

Díaz Soler, Luis. *Historia del esclavitud negra en Puerto Rico.* Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 2005 (1953).
Stark, David M. *Slave Families and the Hato Economy in Puerto Rico*. University Press Florida, 2015.
Zavala Trías, Sylvia. "Ley del 4 de julio de 1870 (Ley Moret)." Antepasados Esclavos, 24 December 2004, Rootsweb.com https://sites.rootsweb.com/~poncepr/ley_moret.html

Transcriptions
Encarnación Navarro, Carlos. Archivo General de Puerto Rico. Fondo de Protocolos Notariales. Caja 1337, Serie Cédulas Testamentarias, Pueblo Aguadilla, 1824-1825, Escribanos: otros funcionarios.